

Measure Up

Fall 2009

Assessment news for eighth-grade teachers



Did You Know?

- **NAEP 2010 will include assessments in geography, civics, and U.S. history.**
- **More than 800 eighth-grade public schools will participate in NAEP in 2010.**
- **Assessments will be conducted from January 25 to March 5, 2010.**

NAEP Long-Term Trend Results Released

The results from the NAEP 2008 long-term trend assessments in reading and mathematics have been released. Nationally representative samples of more than 26,000 public and private school students at age 9, 13, and 17 were assessed in each subject area.

The long-term trend assessments make it possible to chart educational progress since the early 1970s. Results in reading are available for 12 assessments going back to 1971. The first of 11 assessments in mathematics was administered in 1973.

The original assessment format, content, and procedures were revised minimally in 2004 to update content and provide accommodations to students with disabilities and English language learners. The knowledge and skills assessed, however, remain essentially the same since the first assessment year.

The long-term trend results in course-taking at age 13 shows that a higher percentage of students were taking higher-level mathematics courses in 2008 compared to 1986. The percentage of 13-year-olds taking algebra increased from 16 percent to 30 percent, and the percentage taking pre-algebra increased from 19 percent to 32 percent. The percentage of students taking regular mathematics decreased from 61 percent in 1986 to 31 percent in 2008. The full report is available at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>. In the boxes below, the most recent results are compared to those from 2004 and from the first year the assessment was conducted.

Highlights of Reading Results at Age 13

- White students are up 7 points from 1971 and up 4 points from 2004.
- Black students are up 25 points from 1971 and up 8 points from 2004.
- Hispanic students are up 10 points from 1971. There is no significant change in scores from 2004 among Hispanic students.

Highlights of Mathematics Results at Age 13

- White students are up 16 points from 1973.
- Black students are up 34 points from 1973, and Hispanic students are up 29 points from 1973. There is no significant change in scores from 2004 among White, Black, or Hispanic students.



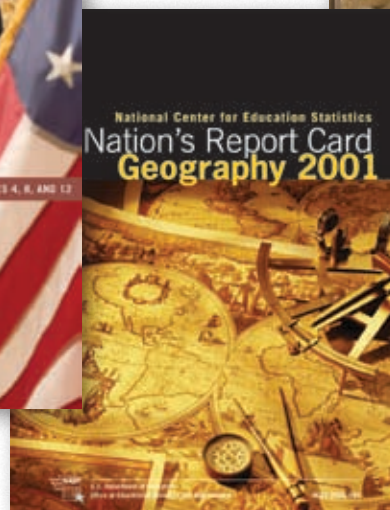
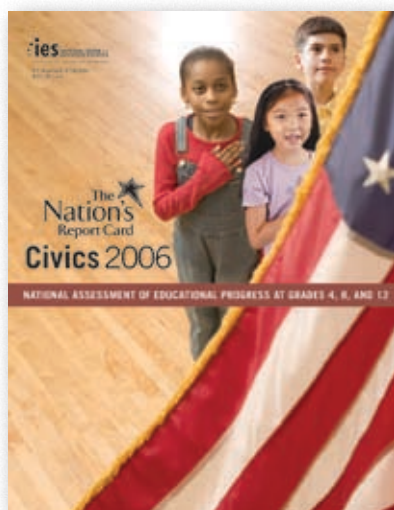
To access
the assessment
frameworks, please visit
<http://nagb.org>,
and select
“Publications.”

Using NAEP in Your Classroom: Civics, Geography and U.S. History

In 2010, NAEP will assess eighth-grade students in U.S. history, civics, and geography. U.S. history and civics were last assessed in 2006. Geography was last assessed in 2001. The assessment framework for each of the subjects contains guidance for the content of the assessment and are developed under the National Assessment Governing Board. The framework provides an outline of what hundreds of teachers, curriculum experts, policy-makers, and members of the general public thought each assessment should test. Once each framework is finalized and adopted, a committee works with measurement specialists to create assessment items and scoring criteria that are aligned to the framework's specifications.

With the publication of NAEP results, select items from each assessment are released. Teachers can access the items, answer keys and scoring guides, sample student responses, and national performance results for eighth-grade students using the NAEP Questions Tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>. The Questions Tool includes both multiple-choice and constructed-response items for all NAEP subjects and grades. One sample item for each of the subjects follows. Included with each item are sample student responses, a scoring guide for constructed-response items, and the aspects of the framework the item addresses.

For more information about the subjects discussed here, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> and select the subject from the left-hand list of content areas.



Sample Civics Item

On the 2006 eighth-grade civics assessment, 33 percent of students provided a correct response on the item below.*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.

According to the passage, which is more important, the individual or the government? Fill in the oval next to your choice. Then give two reasons, based on the words from the Declaration of Independence, to support your answer.

Excerpts from Civics Framework

The content area addressed by this item is *What Are the Foundations of the American Political System?* Students in the early grades should become acquainted with the basic values and principles that are the foundation of the American political system. Their knowledge and understanding should increase as they progress through middle and high school.

The cognitive domain addressed by this item is *Evaluating, Taking, and Defending Positions*. This domain refers to skills required of citizens for assessing issues on the public agenda, making judgments about issues, and discussing their assessments with others in public or private.

Scoring Guide Excerpts

Complete Response gives the correct answer (the individual) and gives two valid reasons that are based on the text. **OR** The student has forgotten to fill in the correct oval, but the student's reasons/answers in the second part of the question make it clear that they understand the individual is more important.

Acceptable The response gives the correct answer, the individual, and only one valid reason. **OR** The student has forgotten to fill in the correct oval, but the student's one reason/answer in the second part of the question makes it clear that they understand the individual is more important.

Partial Response gives the correct answer (the individual) but no reason is given, reasons are vague/inaccurate.

Unacceptable Response does not give correct answer (the individual) or reasons. **OR** The response contradicts the reasons.

Sample Student Response (Complete)

According to the passage, which is more important, the individual or the government? Fill in the oval next to your choice. Then give two reasons, based on the words from the Declaration of Independence, to support your answer.

- ☒ The individual is more important.
☐ The government is more important.

- 1) It says the government gets its power by "the consent of the governed."
- 2) It states that the people have the right to change or get rid of an oppressive government.

* The percent correct for constructed-response items is calculated by summing a weighted percent attaining each score (or level). The weight is based on the number of levels for the item. For example weights in a 5 score level item would be: excellent 5/5, sufficient 4/5, etc.

Sample Geography Item

On the 2001 eighth-grade geography assessment, 46 percent of students answered the following question correctly.*

"The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. How can you buy or sell the sky—the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people."

—Chief Seattle to President Franklin Pierce, 1855

Read the passage above. What does Chief Seattle believe about owning land?

Many other people in the United States hold views on owning land different from those of Chief Seattle. What are these views?

Excerpts from Civics Framework

The content area addressed by this item is *Environment and Society*. Students will be able to answer the following question: What environmental modifications have enabled modern settlers to live in arid regions of the United States and Southwest Asia and/or North Africa?

The cognitive level addressed by this item is *Understanding*. In this area, students are asked to attribute meaning to what has been observed and to explain events. Explaining events and placing them in context requires students to demonstrate the ability to comprehend, to see connections among diverse bits of geographic information, and to use that information to explain existing patterns and processes on Earth.

Scoring Guide Excerpts

Complete The response accurately presents Chief Seattle's view on land and contrasts his view with one opposing view. Views on land may be drawn from the list given in Chief Seattle's letter or include some other appropriate response.

Partial The response explains Chief Seattle's view correctly, or the view held by many other people, but not both. Views about land may be drawn from the list given in Chief Seattle's letter, or include some other appropriate response.

Inappropriate The response does not show an understanding of Chief Seattle's view or the view held by many other people in the United States.

Sample Student Response (Complete)

Read the passage above. What does Chief Seattle believe about owning land?

That it is special and it doesn't really
belong to him.

Many other people in the United States hold views on owning land different from those of Chief Seattle. What are these views?

If you own land it's yours and you can do
whatever you want to it.

* The percent correct for constructed-response items is calculated by summing a weighted percent attaining each score (or level). The weight is based on the number of levels for the item. For example weights in a 5 score level item would be: excellent 5/5, sufficient 4/5, etc.

Sample U.S. History Item

On the 2006 eighth-grade U.S. history assessment, 86 percent of students provided a correct response (C) to the item below.



The remains of this Sinaguan cliff house tell us something about the way ancient people lived in what is now the southwestern part of the United States. Which of the activities below would be the best way to learn how the Sinaguan people lived in ancient times?

- A) Study letters and diaries left in the cliff houses.
- B) Talk to people living near the cliff houses.
- C) Study tools, bones, and pottery left in the cliff houses.
- D) Camp out in the cliff houses for a couple of days.

Excerpts from U.S. History Framework

The content area addressed by this item is *Gathering of People, Cultures, Ideas*. Students will be able to answer the following questions: What racial, ethnic, religious, and national groups formed this nation? What common and diverse cultural traditions did Americans develop? What have been the roles of men and women in American society?

The cognitive level addressed by this item is *Historical Analysis and Interpretation*. Students will be explaining issues, identifying historical patterns, applying historical knowledge, and weighing evidence to draw sound conclusions. This level refers to skills required of citizens for assessing issues on the public agenda, making judgments about issues, and discussing their assessments with others in public or private.

For more information...

For more information about these and other released items, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> and select "Sample Questions."

What is The Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card™ informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For more than three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

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Access specific results for a grade level, subject, jurisdiction, and/or student groups	The NAEP Data Explorer at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata
Find information regarding the types of questions used on NAEP assessments or view subject-specific questions	The NAEP Questions Tool at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls
Download a Sample Questions Booklet that contains sample test questions for the upcoming and previous assessments	The National Center for Education Statistics at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/booklets.asp
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